UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

Why I Became a Unitarian — *Ellsworth M. Smith*

Why I Remain a Unitarian — *Gardner Williams*

Changing Opinions, Ideals, and Values in Religion and Life — *Curtis W. Reese*

What Is a Minister? — *Thaddeus B. Clark*

How Free Is Free Religion? — *John W. Cyrus*

Meditation — *Rudolph W. Gilbert*

WESTERN UNITARIAN CONFERENCE REPORT
RANDALL S. HILTON

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UNITY

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The Field

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."

Lake Geneva

The Lake Geneva Unitarian Summer Assembly will be held at George Williams College Camp, near Williams Bay, Wisconsin, August 22-29. Arrival at Camp should be after lunch on Sunday, August 22.

The registration fee is $5.00; and the lodging and meal rates vary with the type of accommodation chosen or available.

Fruitful courses of study and workshops are provided by the Division of Education, American Unitarian Youth, the Alliance, the Laymen, and the Ministers. The following are the courses of study and the group leaders:

Rediscovering Jesus, The Jew—Robert T. Weston.

The Psychological Development of the Growing Child—Mrs. Reginald D. Manwell.

The History of Unitarianism—Charles H. Lyttle.

Teaching the Bible to the High School Age—Reginald D. Manwell.

Primary Methods and Materials—Mrs. Reginald D. Manwell.

Seminar—"Church School Administration"—Frances W. Wood.

Alliance Seminar and Workshop—Lois McColloch and Mrs. George W. Pieksen.

Laymen's Seminar—William Roger Greeley.

Ministers' Seminar—John G. Gill.

Each morning there will be a lecture by Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, Chicago psychiatrist, on "The Challenge of Living."

Monday through Thursday evenings Dr. Curtis W. Reese will lecture on "Unitarian Tensions Today." Following each lecture, Dr. Merrill E. Bush will conduct a general discussion. Friday evening Dr. Raymond B. Bragg will discuss the Unitarian Service Committee. And on Saturday evening there will be a concert by John Greene, Baritone, Director of Cultural Arts, Abraham Lincoln Centre, Chicago.

At the close of each day firelight services will be conducted on the lake front by Dr. Tracy M. Pullman of Detroit.

The Assembly will close on Sunday, August 29, with a sermon by Dr. Preston Bradley of the People's Church, Chicago.

UNITY

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EDITORIAL

UNITY has now completed its seventieth year of continuous publication. It was started in 1878 as the *Pamphlet Mission* and was published by a committee of Western Unitarian Conference Ministers. The committee consisted of Robert Collyer of Chicago, Jenkin Lloyd Jones of Janesville, Wisconsin, William C. Gannett of St. Paul, C. W. Wendte of Cincinnati, and J. C. Learned of St. Louis. Editors of "Notes and News" were J. T. Sunderland of Chicago and George W. Cooke of Grand Haven, Michigan. The first issue carried the motto, "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion"; and contained an address by Robert Collyer on the subject, "Not Retreat, but Victory," an article on "The Liberal's Mission," by W. C. Gannett, and a section of "Notes and News" about the ministers and churches of the Western Unitarian Conference and other liberal movements in the Central West. The name *Pamphlet Mission* was used from March, 1878, through August of the same year. Beginning with the issue of September, 1878, the name was changed to UNITY. Thus UNITY began as the unofficial organ of the Western Unitarian Conference; and throughout the intervening years UNITY has maintained a close relationship to the Conference, although always independently published and edited. The current issue features the recent Annual Meeting of the Conference in Cincinnati and includes the Annual Report of the Secretary and addresses delivered at the sessions of the Conference. A comparison of the contents of this issue with similar issues of UNITY in the early years shows a striking continuity of spirit and of approach to religious problems. The spirit of the Conference was never bound and its approach was never narrow. It can be said with confidence that the Western Unitarian Conference has made religious history since it was organized in Cincinnati in 1852; and for seventy of these years UNITY and the Conference have been faithful allies and have marched shoulder to shoulder into new territory of the spirit where most religious organizations and journals have been unwilling to venture. Our interpretation of religion has long been beyond Christianity and beyond any particular historic religion. We cut loose from no history that has contributed to our growth but we seek to make new history that will contribute to the growth of the future. We feel most at home in territory where the winds of the spirit move from many directions.

Curtis W. Reese.

Why I Became a Unitarian

ELLSWORTH M. SMITH

William Howard Taft used to give as his version of the usual answer to the question: "Why, then, are there so few Unitarians?" the reply: "Because there are so many in other churches."

When I applied for Unitarian affiliation and was summoned to Beacon Street, Boston, to meet the appropriate committee, the only question asked me was: "How had I come by this heresy?" And my answer was the typical one: "Why, I have been a Unitarian for a long time and have only now come to realize it fully."

It is a worth-while question and I want to give a useful answer.

I think it began when I was eight years old. Listening to the reading of the Old Testament stories of God sending the Israelites out to slaughter their enemies and punishing them when they spared the women and the cattle, I simply did not believe it. Sure that God was good, I had to refuse to believe that he was also vicious.

During high school days I lived in a little backwater community where all the high school youngsters went to Sunday School, Church, and Prayer Meeting, and had the plan of salvation and the details of the second coming drilled into them. The fact that in spite of all such efforts these same youngsters lived pretty cynical lives determined me to become a minister and see if maybe I could not do a job of interpreting religion that would give young people something to live by, something of integrity. Religion ought to be able to determine moral quality.

College, later, was the usual experience of many a young person learning about the nature of the universe and of the mind of man for the first time and becoming an ardent disciple of truth. Studies in psychology and the geologic history of man gave my thinking a wider horizon and dispelled my last fears of what would happen if I stumbled onto a new idea that might run counter to my earlier beliefs. From then on life was a strenuously growing process and the growing pains were a pleasure.

During high school days I used to be awed by a little martinet of a principal who, without warning, would throw the door open, march into the classroom, swivel, click his heels together, and with the precision of an automaton recite a proverb. Then, with equal suddenness he would throw himself into reverse and leave the room without a word of comment. One of these aphorisms stuck by me. It was: "Every man owes to the world a life of usefulness." All along the line I have been testing my religious assumptions in my own life and against the testing experiences of others by that measure. How useful is my religion? Does it provide strength, does it promote freedom and joy, does it give the courage of realism?

Particularly interested in the problems of young people and the troubles and sorrows of all ages, I constantly sought to winnow away the unnecessary assumptions that through complexity befog the simple challenge of truth, and also the false assumptions designed either to give spurious superiority or to dominate through fear.

I majored in theology for seven long years and emerged from the fray with one single conviction: that the important things about religion and life are our attitudes and values. These are the dynamic and the controls. My values were strongly determined by the Beatitudes of Jesus and my attitude by the life of magnanimity he lived. Thus I voluntarily adopted the discipline of ideals that were both simple and rigorous, and when I betray them I betray myself and know that I have failed.

Studies in the religions of other peoples and civilizations encouraged me with the essential oneness of ideals which in spite of important and often tragic differences seem to me to promise the possibility one day that the ethics and motivations we hold in common may unite the peoples of the world in a powerfully determining expression of brotherhood and mutuality.

The story of Albert Schweitzer helped a great deal, for here was a man whose devotion to truth led him to write and publish a book, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus,* which brought orthodox theology based on revealed supernatural religion crashing down, never again to command the false awe of thinking people, yet whose compulsion to work out on his own the ethics of Jesus led him to the magnificent life he has lived and which is only now reaching its peak of usefulness.

In my first parish, in a vacation area on the coast of Maine, there came each summer a band of some seventy marine biologists who worked at the ferreting out of useful truth about a disease resembling human cancer which was peculiar to an especially repulsive type of fish that abounded in those waters. These men I admired, for I had cherished an early ambition to be a doctor and engage in research. They gave lectures in my church every Wednesday afternoon during the summer and I never missed one. Many of these scientists became friends and smoking companions, but none of them, much to my chagrin, ever came to my church on Sunday mornings. This bothered me greatly—my admiration for their vocation blinding me to the probable fact that I was expressing a religious concept so far removed from their open-minded quest for truth and its integrity as to be beyond their appreciation. I decided that one thing was certain: they were so much more open-minded and inquiring, so much more zealous in their search for useful truth than I had been, that I had no basis for criticizing them, rather that I should learn from them.

The time I decided that I could not believe that Jesus was the divine son of God in the sense of deity, but that he was a flesh-and-blood man much like one of us who nevertheless so splendidly devoted himself to one great loyalty as to become outstanding in his ability to help people and to reveal to them their own unrealized potentialities,—that time was a revolutionary experience. My immediate and abiding discovery was that the meaning of Jesus became clear for the first time and that the example of his life was infinitely more usable than it had been. It also set me free to recognize and give fair evaluation to the many others who have exemplified the same qualities of spirit.

That first parish combined in one religious enterprise congregations that were Baptist and Congregationalist and Unitarian. The Baptists and Congregationalists were gradually overcoming their distaste for each other, but the complete cordiality of the Unitarian group in Northeast Harbor, Maine, in welcoming the

fellowship of sincere Baptists and Congregationalists alike, without question, and with only an appreciation of the goodness of life in both groups as people, set me on the road to becoming formally a Unitarian.

I had trouble with the Baptists. I had applied for ordination after previously sprinkling a number of Congregational young people and after preaching in the Unitarian Church. Thus, the Baptist ordaining council might have been expected to bridle a bit, and bridle they did. "We don't doubt, Mr. Smith, that you want to be a minister and perhaps should be one, but why do you insist upon being a Baptist?" By that time I felt like saying: "Darned if I know." The crucial problem however that resulted in a narrow vote was my difficulty in finding adequate reasons for consigning certain kinds of people to everlasting punishment. Again, as before, I had to choose between being sure that the universe is good and the supposition that at the heart of it is a vengeance that can conceive and decree eternal punishment. My choice had long before been made and I was ordained by a vote of 27 to 25. Thus it came that I was "set aside for the ministry," a phraseology I now change of my own desire to "standing apart if need be for a clean search for truth."

I cherished for a long time the creedlessness of the Baptist denomination but became bitterly disillusioned by the severity with which conformity to an invisible creed is enforced by that group.

I later became a Presbyterian of the northern branch because of the opportunity afforded me by a call to one of their churches in the South to work for better racial and labor practices.

The war period brought me to the North again, to Detroit, to work at a civilian program related to the war effort, and it was during my five years in interdenominational work in Detroit that I made up my mind that when I should seek a church again, it would be a Unitarian church.

I became a Unitarian because Unitarians really practice the mutual respect and freedom to which my original denomination gave only lip service. There is some Irish in me which makes me independent and which requires that my convictions, however awkward they may seem to others, be allowed to me without question.

I became a Unitarian because I believe that a religion of self-reliance is the only kind of religion that is true to the facts of human motivation and the only kind of religion that can draw forth from man his greatest possibilities. Breasted, the eminent Egyptologist, in his studies of the beginnings of social conscience, points out that the civilizations based on religions that respect the qualities and capabilities of man have been the constructive civilizations but that the civilizations that debase man with religious teachings of futility and helplessness are always destructive of progress, predatory, and productive of vicious strife.

I became a Unitarian because I rebelled against the orthodox view, expressed in its extremity by the Lutheran teaching that if a person believes aright and is saved, then all the evil he commits is still powerless to deny him eternal blessing. I became a Unitarian because I learned that the evil a man does can never be fully redeemed in the harm inflicted upon others, and that, therefore, the kind of life a man lives is a better testimonial to the kind of man he is than any formally accepted credo; that for the individual, the integrity of sound character, and for society, the voluntarily accepted mutuality of our common lot, are the tests of worth. I hate, I despise, the tremendous volume of pietistic hypocrisy which hides viciousness and inhumanity behind a respectable theological facade of reverence for God. Let a man produce, or stop pretending! This ethical imperative, I believe, finds a more conducive climate in the Unitarian fellowship than in any other. If I did not believe this I would not have sought affiliation. I will work toward this end.

I became a Unitarian because I rebelled against the kind of religion that makes and keeps people leaning all their lives, essentially, though often unconsciously, selfish in their neurotic craving for approval and safety.

I became a Unitarian because Unitarians lack the festering pride of exclusive possession. They are, at their best, in the Quaker sense, "seekers," and the more urgent the world situation, the more earnestly they seek the truth that redeems man and society.

I became a Unitarian because here I am not someone set aside and called The Reverend, or what-have-you, but am enjoyably a man invited to come and work along with the group in the hope that once in a while I may have some insight that will help, and now and again be able to say, "Here is something finer than I have ever grasped before."

Finally, I became a Unitarian because I believe that Unitarianism has within it the possibility of becoming the really redemptive religion-of-the-people.

I grew up among working people who lived with the constant fear of being laid off. I worked among the afflicted of the dust bowl, the disadvantaged of the mountains, and the disinherited of the agricultural South. I believe in people! And with reason, for I have witnessed examples of self-reliance and stark courage in the face of hopelessness that will always command my reverence. I want for these people a religion that will fulfill their great expectations. There was a region in Breathitt County, Kentucky, where a respectable religion was displaced in the boom times of logging camps by a rabidly emotional religion. A wrinkled old lady described to me what happened: "The Holiness, it's got the best of us." Degradation by way of religion! Or despair by way of religion! Or fear by way of religion! Or "serene I fold my hands and wait" by way of religion! We who are Unitarians have a religion which, though we keep it pretty well-bottled up in highly volatile intellectualized forms, is in reality the revolutionary virus that can stir the latent self-respect of all the humble people of the earth to the point of remaking society from the grass roots up. Then, should this happen, we will witness the meek made mighty by the power of aroused spirit entering into their inheritance with pride. They will have grown their length out as persons.

I am still pursuing the old quest—to interpret religion in such a way that every person coming within its influence shall become more like what he was intended, in the scheme of things, to be: a man worthy of the highest concept of God that mankind can conceive. That is why I became a Unitarian.

I expect I shall be disappointed, perhaps importantly disappointed. But I am sure, and this confidence will not falter, that within the framework of this strong tradition and within the warmth of this honest fellowship, are the possibilities that I seek to fulfill for myself and for those to whom I owe a life of usefulness.

Why I Remain a Unitarian

GARDNER WILLIAMS

I remain a Unitarian because one should have some religion; and because Unitarianism seems to me to be the best of all the sects. I shall argue the following points:

1. That fundamentalism is obviously false.
2. That the good life and a civilized social order mutually depend upon each other, and both depend upon religion.
3. That Unitarianism is the answer for enlightened people.

Unitarianism is best for enlightened people because it does not try to force them to believe foolish things about how the universe is operated. It does not tell them that they are sinful if they disbelieve in any supernatural forces, or in secret purposes lurking amid the dark entrails of nature, or in transcendent spiritual authorities and cosmic guarantors of value. It does not fight science, and it is not afraid of the full implications, as interpreted by reason, of scientific knowledge.

Particularly, it does not try to make men feel guilty when they give a naturalistic interpretation, without emotional reservations, to the theory of biological evolution, and to the psychological theory of the dependence of all consciousness upon the nervous system. It does not call on men to endorse publicly those childish and primitive theological ideas which have come down to us from a pre-scientific age, which have expressed man's wishes far more than they have expressed his critical intelligence, and which have functioned largely as propaganda for holding the interest and retaining the membership of ignorant people who were spiritually slavish, confused, and oppressed with the sense of sin.

Those primitive theological ideas are now propounded by the orthodox sects as the true essence of the one true religion, which may be thought of as Christianity in general, or perhaps just their sect. And these sects tell us that without a belief in these theological ideas no one can either be free from guilt in this world or escape hell in the next.

Many men have come to understand the falsity of orthodox theology. The experience of life, interpreted by reason, ought to be enough to expose this falsity to anyone. Also the study of science is a great help. The history of human culture is a help, and particularly the history of religion, and comparative religion, and parts of ancient and modern philosophy. People are prevented from understanding its falsity sometimes by ignorance of these studies, sometimes by inattention to the difficulties, sometimes by mental dullness, sometimes by their respect for the learned persons who defend fundamentalism, sometimes by the social pressure which churches can bring to bear upon them, and sometimes by a powerful wish and need that fundamentalism should be true. Almost any minister in an orthodox denomination needs to keep right on believing in orthodoxy. If he deviates, his career in the church may be ruined, and he may not be equipped to carry on any other kind of work. The career of many a minister or priest has been wrecked, sometimes beyond repair, by his intellectual awakening to the falsity of orthodox theology.

But in a culture with a high level of economic prosperity, and with a tradition of freedom in government, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and with much intellectual stimulus from science, from organized education, from cheap publications and radio, a great many people do see through the fictions of fundamentalism.

And a great many of these decide to stay away from organized religion. We are informed that half of the people in the United States are not connected with any church. Often the unchurched accept the church's ideology, and just do not feel like participating in its social activities. But also often the unchurched are the people who have seen the folly of the fundamentalist ideology.

It seems rational in some ways to abandon an institution when one discovers that its principles are false. Why go around on Sunday and listen to a lot of things and say a lot of things that you know are not true? Why sing a lot of songs when what the words mean is obviously false? Is it not a waste of time? And how about your intellectual integrity? Can you *honestly* say these things? You cannot. Then you cannot respect yourself if you keep asserting them publicly. You must feel intellectually insincere in openly supporting and joining in the activities of an institution whose principles you actually reject.

Thus it would seem that if religion is false we should give it up both as a waste of time and in order to maintain our own intellectual integrity, sincerity, and self-respect.

But, as previously stated, everybody ought to have some religion. Religion is indispensable. It is necessary for a good life, and for the maintenance of a civilized order, or of any order, in society. Let us consider the nature of civilization and what makes it tick. Here I shall seem to be getting a long way from Unitarianism. But this apparent digression is necessary in order to validate my final contentions about Unitarianism.

Civilization is a vast and complex social system built upon (1) the division of labor or the specialization of function, (2) upon agriculture, (3) upon force, and (4) upon religion.

Specialization of function means that individuals and groups perform certain limited activities. One set of people, a small minority, makes shoes and they make enough for themselves and for everybody else. Another group provides building materials for everybody (we are all using these in processed form), another transportation, another education, another (the government) provides political leadership and with its army and navy provides protection for life and property as far as it can. Another supplies food. Another, the clergy, tries to hold certain ideals of conduct before everyone's eyes in a vivid fashion.

This concentration of each individual and group upon special tasks has made human labor far more efficacious and productive. The quantity of wealth in civilization is therefore far greater than it is under primitive, savage, or tribal conditions, where each man is pretty much a jack-of-all-trades and many things that we civilized folk have come to value simply are not produced. This greater wealth permits much larger populations to be supported, and almost always, due to the great prolificness of mankind, in civilized society much greater numbers are found in a given area of land than among savages.

The production of food under civilized conditions is always very largely by agriculture, the second point

mentioned as underlying civilization. Civilized society could hardly have come into existence based on the hunting economy of paleolithic man before c. 12,000 B.C. But with agriculture in the neolithic age after 12,000 B.C. man had invented a technique for preserving a surplus of food that would keep, and that could be stored for future use. By its means, a portion of the population can produce enough food to feed itself and also to keep all of the other people alive who are engaged in the various non-food production activities of civilization.

The third factor mentioned as underlying civilization was force. Life and property are protected by the armed forces of the government. Civilization could not survive if the government did not have the power to enforce its laws, to prevent or punish crime, to enforce private contracts, and to collect the taxes needed to cover its expenses in all these and some other activities. The United States government must have this power in order to make civilization tick in this country. And it has this power. If you decide not to pay your taxes, government agents will come and take some or all of your property.

Even decisions of the United States Supreme Court are obeyed only because the power of the government, based on armed force, stands back of them. Were that armed force unavailable, some laws and decisions might be carried out for a while, but various perverted social forces, that is, organizations of predatory individuals, within the country and without, stand ready to defy the law and to institute racketeering enterprises which, if unchecked, will put an end to the laws we have and waste the accumulated political and legal wisdom which these embody.

The beginning of civilization and of civilized governments was, of course, in just such racketeering activities as now threaten its higher development. It is today an outgrowth of these early sordid racketeering activities. It has been partly humanized and moralized and rationalized. But the basic pattern of its early structure is still discernible within it. We shall be helped in understanding the fundamentals of the social order of civilization, and in realizing how essential religion is to its preservation and progress, by examining its original form.

In the early civilizations a predatory aristocracy exploited a mass of peasantry who derived few benefits, or perhaps no benefits at all, from the system. At the very start of civilization doubtless savage chiefs with gangs of warriors robbed and murdered the farmers. Force was used primarily for taking other people's property. Karl Marx said that civilization is Theft, and to some extent that is true today, but it was much more widespread at the dawn of civilization.

Stealing was more fun than working to produce the grain. Then it must have seemed better in the long run, to *some* of the more *intelligent* predators, not to kill one's victims, and not to take all of their produce, but to leave them enough to live on so that they might be there to be raided again next year. Then as the predators or kings became still more farsighted, collections were put upon a percentage basis and were called tribute or taxes instead of loot; and it became important to protect the producers from rival racketeers. Thus the prime functions of government developed—to collect protection money (or taxes) and to give protection. Or should I reverse the order of these? To give protection and to collect taxes to pay the expenses of protection. And this is what every successful government does primarily today. That is the chief thing that the United States government is doing for us now. It is spending billions on the army, navy, and airforce, to protect our lives and property, and it is making each of us contribute toward the expense.

But, as I said, at the dawn of civilization, what records and evidences we have make it look as if civilized government was then a pretty mean and sordid sort of a racket. Civilization really got started in the form of systematic burglary. Civilized society arose out of primitive conditions as a result of the desire of some men for other men's property, chiefly agricultural products.

Historically the fundamentals were the same in the early stages of all the ancient civilizations. The peasants were there to produce the food, the king and his army were there to take most of it away from them, and religion was organized to make them like it by telling them that it was all divinely authorized, and that to refuse to pay one's taxes was atheism.

What we have today, as I have suggested, is a system which is still based on force, and we still have a certain amount of unfair inequality and exploitation. And I must say that I think that we shall always have a certain degree of these, though perhaps the quantity may be diminished. Institutions are going to require leadership, and the leaders are going to have a number of special privileges above the average, and some of those below the average are going to feel humiliated and jealous.

But our taxes are not wholly theft. We need the protection we are paying for. We get our money's worth—or nearly. If the city, state, and national governments which we support should die out for lack of funds, other racketeers far more rapacious would take over and would not give us as much for our money. They would, like the early predatory kings, and like some later kings and dictators, incline to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Long experience through many generations has taught those rulers who function within our political traditions, the importance of nourishing the goose, and we have today many governmental activities which help business. By doing this a government is made far more secure. Nourishing the goose is one of the basic principles of political longevity,—and every government, democracy or dictatorship, aims at its own self-preservation.

But civilized governments cannot rest on force alone. If a government secures obedience to its laws and the payment of its taxes only by the threat of confiscation or execution, it cannot last. Various corruptions spread through both the upper and lower strata of society and kill it. Another principle of political longevity is indispensable—and that is religion, the fourth basis of civilization which we mentioned.

In the early civilizations, and until recently, religion was almost always *established*—it was supported by the government. Building the temples, their upkeep, and the support of the priesthood, was financed or guaranteed by the government. The priests were government employees who were hired to push an ideology that would help to strengthen the government. Organized religion was the propaganda agency of the government. It sometimes taught that the king was a god (the Pharoah in ancient Egypt, and Hirohito in Japan until January 1, 1946) or a specially designated representative of God, in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, and elsewhere. In Rome

the emperor was divine. In modern Europe kings ruled by divine right, for example, George VI of England, and therefore refusal to pay taxes or to obey the king's laws was atheism.

Organized religion taught humble men somewhat willingly to cooperate with the system—humble men who at first had little or nothing to gain from the system. Probably organized religion was necessary in order to teach them to do this. They could not understand possible remote benefits to themselves, or foresee future benefits which their descendants would derive from civilization. And organized religion has continued to teach men cooperation in later centuries when the civilized order has conferred considerable benefits upon farmers and workers as well as upon other classes. Religion has consistently inspired men with ideals of cooperation. It has helped each man to feel a joy and self-respect in making his own large or small contribution, in his specialized work, to the civilized system which was composed of many men, each performing one necessary portion of the total work upon which the prosperity and security and freedom of all depended. True religion tends to make men glad to cooperate with the present system so far as it is good; and so far as men rebel against the injustice of it, religion tends to make them demand constructive reforms which will benefit posterity, and which thus are meant to be a form of cooperation with the men of the future.

In a sense, religion is soothing syrup to diminish the agony caused by the extraction of taxes. By giving men an enthusiasm for the ideals of joyful cooperation with their fellows, present and future, as organized into humane institutions, religion has eliminated much of the pain of slavish cooperation under threat of punishment. It has transformed slavishness into joyful, creative activity. It has given men self-respect in service. It has made men *happy* to contribute—and the only final good is happiness. Whatever causes it is instrumentally good. So religion was good soothing syrup at the start. And it still helps to keep men joyful in a world where growing taxes, the costs of protection, are one of the major obstacles to true peace of mind.

Today in America churches are not established. The constitution forbids their establishment. Long experience in Europe demonstrated that an established church tended to corrupt both the Church and the State, under modern conditions. You cannot trust any set of sectarian ecclesiastics with a specially privileged political position. They abuse their privileges. Every sect with a dogmatic creed is too narrow in its view to be worthy of official governmental authorization under modern conditions. We Unitarians might be corrupted by it if we had it. We might arouse a lot of antagonism, and we might grow less liberal.

However, it seems very clear to me that at various earlier stages of human development the establishment of religion was indispensable for the maintenance and for the progress of civilization. If religion cannot flourish without governmental backing, it must have this backing. For it must flourish, or else civilization will disintegrate.

The public schools have now in part substituted for the old established church. These schools teach children to love their country, to honor the constitution, and to earn a living so that they will be able to fulfill their obligations and pay their taxes. Our free democratic institutions are founded largely on the public school system. It is, in the broadest sense, a religious institution, though this broad sense is not the one intended in the United States constitution.

But the public schools are not enough. The unestablished churches must perform somewhat the same functions that the established churches, from which they have grown, performed. Churches today have the job of making life a joyful, creative activity instead of a slavish task performed through fear of a tyrannical master. They must cooperate with the public schools and all educational institutions to teach religion in the broadest sense to which I just referred.

Here let me state what this sense is. True religion is, in essence, an active devotion to an ideal. At its best it is an active enthusiasm for the comprehensive ideal of man's highest good. There is religion whenever men catch a vision of the conditions and the nature of the sort of life that will be most deeply satisfactory in the long run, and when they feel a great enthusiasm for creating those conditions and creating that nature, so that they are willing to undergo hardships for it, and to sacrifice immediate satisfactions for it. Religion means that men gladly submit to the discipline of civilized life for the sake of a deep and lasting satisfaction which far outweighs the pains and frustrations that were suffered along the way. Unless men have this, I say, civilization will collapse. If they have it in a deficient degree, civilization will be deficient. (Civilization *is* deficient.) Civilization depends upon religion as well as upon agriculture, the division of labor, and force, for its existence.

Religion is due partly, but basically, to human heredity. Man alone has an innate capacity and tendency to envisage and pursue ideals with enthusiasm. This is the same as saying that *man is a rational animal.*

And then, of course, man's innate capacities and tendencies to religion must be developed and guided by training.

Religion is taught in the home and in the school, by books and newspapers and magazines. Conceivably it might exist adequately without any special ecclesiastical institutions. But it has developed special institutions, and these are very helpful and under present circumstances indispensable.

The chief function of the church is to teach people what the great ideals of the good life are, ideals such as truth, justice, and honor; and, as I have indicated, to inspire people to pursue these ideals effectively in spite of difficulties and disappointments. This active devotion to great ideals is the love of God. God is man's highest good. St. Thomas Aquinas said that in Paris about 1250 A.D. He got it from Aristotle who said it in Athens about 350 B.C. Pascal also said it, in Paris, about 1650 A.D. Many other deeply religious people have said it. And it is true. The history of religions shows that the gods in all ages have been human ideals: Apollo in Greece was the god or the ideal of light and reason; Hermes was the god of travel and commerce; Osiris in Egypt was the god of the Nile river and the economic prosperity based upon it; Jahweh in Palestine was the god of battles and vengeance (until 700 B.C.) while the Jews were fighting somewhat successfully against the Philistines and other enemies. He was the god of love and compassion after 700 B.C., when Jews were being robbed and murdered by the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, etc., and so came to idealize love and compassion.

The essence of divinity is an ideal potentiality of perfection which exceeds all actual attainment, and

yet which is one of the most important things in life. It is the final goal of all rationally calculated striving, and the ultimate criterion of all actual attainment. Without God man would have no star to guide him and no standards.

Of course every rational being has some guiding ideal and some standards. (Everyone has some religion.) But these may be inadequate or perverse compared to what a greater reason and a more profound insight would envisage. A church ought to clarify men's vision.

Most churches do this. Most churches carry on true religion. Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Greek polytheism, Egyptian and Roman polytheism, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, all were or are true religions. But *most churches also hold that man ought to worship force.* They ask men to bow down before the greatest force in the universe or before the basic substance and the ultimate energy of all things. Thus in many cases they ask men to worship what is clearly by their own statement a cause of evil, and thus an evil thing. If God is omnipotent he has done everything, and thus he has done a great deal of evil. Moreover, if he could prevent the terrible evils which afflict humanity, and if he has deliberately omitted to do this, that voluntary omission was an evil choice of his. Thus orthodoxy interprets God as being part devil, and summons mankind to the constant practice of devil worship, in a satanic sacrament which is truly an outward sign of an inward disgrace.

Perversions of human reason have never sunk lower than in the arguments to prove that God is wholly good and omnipotent. In its treatment of the problem of evil, orthodoxy bids good-bye to the plain lessons of experience, to reason, to truth, to clarity, to intelligence, and in some cases to honesty. I refer chiefly to the writings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Descartes, Pascal, F. H. Bradley, and Reinhold Niebuhr. I have been reading these men recently. There are thousands of others. Some, like Niebuhr, are honest because theological tradition blinds them to rational evidence. But Descartes, and many others, were not wholly blinded in this way.

God is not the supreme being or ultimate substance of things. God and the supreme being lie poles apart. Nothing is lower than the supreme being or ultimate reality or substantial core of nature and of the universe. It underlies everything. Nothing is higher than God. He is the highest and most perfect, exceeding all actual realization. And here let me note in passing that it is foolish for mystics to wish to merge with absolute being when they have no evidence except their own wish indicating that there would be any great joy in doing this—even if it were possible.

What theologians should admit is at least limitation in God's power. By so doing they can, without contradiction, save his unqualified goodness and perfection, which is the *spiritually essential element in his nature. All else is religiously superfluous.* The worship of force and power is perversion of religion which I find either explicitly present or else present by implication in the avowed principles of all orthodox sects. The world needs to get away from the worship of power and to devote itself to a good which is truly good, as expressing the genuine needs of man's nature undistorted by the tyranny of any external force. The notion of God as omnipotent probably is due partly to the fact that ancient priesthoods imagined the universe to be organized in the same pattern as the dictatorial governments under which they lived. God was regarded as the dictator of the universe. In a dictatorship it is treason to admit any deficiency either in the goodness or in the power of the Fuehrer. And it has been called religious treason, or atheism, to admit similar deficiencies in God. But I deny that God is the dictator of the universe. The characteristics that it was once expedient to attribute to Caesar have been wrongly rendered unto God.

In Unitarianism I find that the organization is not openly or secretly committed to any such perversions of religion as I have noted in all orthodox sects. Its free mind principle, won only after a century of spiritual and cultural progress, permits the human spirit to explore these problems freely, to try all things, and to hold fast to that which appears good and true and rational.

A Unitarian church is a group of people banded together, seeking spiritual enlightenment, guidance, and inspiration. They hire a trained leader to help them. They are ready to inquire critically into any proposed set of beliefs. They wish to use all the spiritual resources of man's cultural tradition, whether found in Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, or in secular science and philosophy. But five general principles stand out on which I think we can all agree—they were formulated by Committee A in 1944: Freedom, Truth, Democracy, Brotherhood, World Community.

This is better than the traditional five points of Unitarianism: The fatherhood of God; the brotherhood of man; the leadership of Jesus; salvation by character; the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

In certain orthodox sects there are many individuals who do not believe in their creeds. Their friends are there and they will stick. If prosperity and enlightenment continue to grow, many orthodox sects will probably become like Unitarians in the next century, but probably without merging with Unitarianism.

Also, for many centuries at least, many unenlightened men will need sensationally supernaturalistic authoritarian churches. If the churches of this kind which we have with us now did not organize and exploit these people as they do, somebody else would. And along with their superstitions these churches preach and practice true religion. They teach good morals and are a real inspiration to virtuous living.

I stay in the Unitarian church because it is the leading denomination in the United States which encourages constructive criticism in religion. It is more favorable to enlightenment and progress than any other. In permitting the Humanists to dwell in its midst it has shown its willingness to entertain a radical and true criticism of one of the most persistent errors in all traditional religious thought.

Unitarianism is not a religion for the masses now and it may never be. It is the spearhead of religious progress. Other sects will follow its lead if Western civilization remains prosperous. All enlightened people should flock to our Unitarian banner and give their wholehearted support. I stay with it because I feel the importance of doing just that.

Changing Opinions, Ideals, and Values In Religion and Life

CURTIS W. REESE

A half century is not a long period in terms of the span of time on this planet. Yet in the cumulative ratio of change the last half century represents rapidity and radicality of change far beyond that of any previous similar period. Opinions long in the making have come to fruition, ideals but dimly held from ancient times have burst into bloom, and values only intermittently sensed by choice souls through the ages have come to dominate the conscience of enlightened people throughout the world. So rapid and far-reaching are these changes in opinions, ideals, and values that we can hardly grasp their significance. So varied and multiple are they that we can scarcely comprehend them.

It will be useful, therefore, for us to summarize at least a few of the changes in religious opinions, societal ideals, and motivating values that appear to have come rather fully into the consciousness of our time.

First, let us note that in the field of societal ideals, functions, and responsibilities we have undergone remarkable changes, particularly in our understanding of the nature and use of government. Many of us can remember when the dominant American idea was that the proper functions of government should be limited to the areas of defense, of maintaining order, of establishing rules, and of adjudicating disputes between citizens. It was commonly said that the least government is the best government. The positive promotion of the public welfare was unduly limited.

But within the last half century we have become accustomed to public regulations and controls in wide areas of our social and economic life. And still more important, we now think of government as a positive instrument in the hands of the people by means of which great cooperative endeavors can be carried out. The Tennessee Valley Authority, rural electrification, public housing, and the guaranty of bank deposits are striking and significant examples of the changed attitude toward the functions of government.

In the area of social security, government has accepted responsibility for the well-being of the people in a way that our fathers could hardly have dreamed. Public health measures have made great headway and still more far-reaching measures are in the making. Civil rights, the enforcement of which had too long been left to the chance action of individuals or unusually enlightened officials, are now a major concern of the Federal government. Much yet remains to be accomplished in this field but the people generally now expect government leadership in seeing to it that civil rights are respected.

The shift in opinion from the idea of government as a policeman, or at best as an umpire, to the ideal of government as a means of cooperation in the carrying out of common purposes for the commonweal is a shift of tremendous importance. I do not believe that in America the idea of the State as an end can ever take precedence over the idea of the State as a means. It yet remains to be seen how effectively we can use government as the instrument par excellence of serving the best interests of all the people and of guaranteeing the well-being of all the people. But today we are at least making explicit that which was implicit in the language of our founding fathers when they said that this government was ordained and established "to promote the common welfare."

Let us note also that the last half century has witnessed revolutionary changes in our conception of the very nature of values, motivations, and goals.

We have moved from an individual-centered salvation to a social conception of the very nature of our souls. The teaching that no man liveth unto himself alone has taken on new meaning. We are what we are because of what others are and have been. We all go up or down together. We have come to see that there can be no widespread individual regeneration without the regeneration of the social structure.

We have moved forward in our understanding of what constitutes a good man. We have come to see that nebulous piety is not enough, that a sense of awe in the presence of mystery is not enough, and that good intention is not enough. A good man is one who inquires diligently into the meaning of facts, who is concrete in his devotion to worthy causes, and who translates purpose into action.

We in our time have witnessed the passing of other worldly goals and the emergence of goals related to the world in which we live. It was easy to lift our gaze above the misery of a real world and fix it upon an unreal world of wish fulfillment. We have found it more fruitful, if more difficult, to commit ourselves to the achievement of values related to our world and to our time.

These changes in opinions, ideals, and values have the effect of placing squarely on the shoulders of man the responsibility for determining the kind of world in which man shall live. We can shirk the responsibility and drift into chaos or we can accept the responsibility and make the very atoms serve the spirit of man. The basic knowledge that is at our disposal, the technological instrumentalities that are at hand, and the means that we have of acquiring greater knowledge and more refined instrumentalities are such that no insuperable obstacles stand in the way of the realization of the age-old dream of a good life for good men in a good world. If we will it so, it can be so.

Chiefly, however, let us note changes of opinion in the field of religion. The development and refinement of opinions regarding the nature of religious sources, personalities, and doctrines are such as to frighten those who look to the past and are encumbered by tradition, but to brighten with hope those who look to the future.

In the matter of religious sources we think first of all of the sacred literature of the world religions. In past ages, before the advent of the critical scientific study of documents, religious literature had a way of getting itself approved as peculiarly authoritative. This authority derived from the supernatural origin of the literature, or from the unique place held by its human author. Usually the human author merely mediated the message. When few people could read and write, and when still fewer could understand what was writ-

ten, it was comparatively easy for writings to gain credence as the very word of God, or, at least, as the Modernist would say, the *norm* of religious experience.

So the Vedas and other sacred writings held sway in India; the Zendavesta, in Persia; the Tripitaka, in Buddhist lands; the Classics, in China; the Old Testament, in Orthodox Judaism; the whole Bible, in Orthodox Christianity; the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price, in Mormonism; Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, in Christian Science.

But in recent times critical students have successfully challenged not only the verbal inspiration of sacred books but also the very idea of authoritative books as *norms* of valid modern religious experience. In Christianity the smoke of the battle over higher criticism still lingers on the far horizon; but for the most part the fundamentalists have been put to flight. In the various great religions critical heretics have blazed away at the scriptures, with varying results; but with the general effect that now the educated leaders of all religions look with an expression of dismay upon their fellow religionists who still appeal to the authority of sacred volumes.

With the passing of the unique origin of the sacred scriptures, their unique nature ceased to have unique authority. In other words, the trend is definitely away from regarding any ancient writing as the norm for modern religious life. The effect of this is not to rob the people of religious literature, but to increase the literary material available for religious purposes. All literature, ancient and modern, that is profitable for spiritual purposes is the sacred literature of modern religion.

It is likewise with the institutions of religion. In spite of the teaching of many great religious leaders to the contrary, their followers have generally regarded organizations, institutions, and places as religious sources. At times it has been a certain line of succession, at times a particular mountain top, at times a temple or a cathedral or a shrine. These and other visible and invisible evidences that peculiar sources of religious life were possessed have resulted in streams of pilgrims to these sacred sources from the most ancient times. It has taken a long time for even a portion of the race to learn that the spirit of religion is not bound, that all worthful organizations and institutions and places are holy. But the present-day trend is definitely in the direction of regarding all inspirational movements and places, all experience of art and skill and wonder as sources of religious inspiration. While this may finally have a sad effect upon the institutions of organized religion, it will, nevertheless, have a wholesome effect upon the life of mankind. The religious institutions that would survive must do so in open competition with all other human institutions. This again gives us not fewer but more sources of religious inspiration.

With the passing of scripture and institutions as final authoritative religious sources, the Modernist type of mind fell in with the traditional mystical way and declared *experience* to be the authoritative religious source. This had a scientific sound. It made a universal appeal. It gave great promise. But the appeal to experience is already going the way of former religious sources. In its place will come, is now coming, *experimental experience;* that is, scientific method applied to the spiritual experience of man. Uncontrolled and uncriticized experience is no safer guide than the older authorities. Experiences are varied, multiple, and belong to their setting. It is only by controlled experience, under conditions of testing, that we have good hope of using it as a dependable source. We can no longer appeal to uncontrolled experience as authority in religious matters.

The study of religious sources tends definitely away from the superhuman and authoritative to the human and experimental.

There is similar change of opinion in the appraisal of the dramatic religious leaders of history. Most of the religions have been built around the real or supposed teaching and personality of real or mythical founders. Hinduism and Shintoism are possible exceptions. The names of Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, and Mary Baker Eddy are associated with the origin and history of the religions with which their names are so intimately connected.

To a considerable extent the same is true of the sects. Even John the Baptist is claimed by the sect that bears his name. The name of John Calvin is linked with Presbyterianism, John Wesley with Methodism, Alexander Campbell with Disciples, and so on. Most of the religions and sects are the lengthened shadows of dominant personalities.

But nothing is surer today than the fact that social theory and the democratic spirit tend to discount the dramatic leader, and to magnify the cumulative notions of many people. Cooperative study and research, and the consensus of the competent, are replacing the dominant personality.

Nowhere is this trend away from the domination of dramatic religious leaders more forcibly set forth than in the changing attitude toward Jesus of Nazareth. Only a little while ago the Christian world regarded Jesus as nothing less than very God of very God. Then the Modernists, emphasizing his humanity, made him a depository of all modern idealism. Others, however, challenged the doctrine of the adequacy of his moral and spiritual leadership. They pointed out that he said nothing against slavery although slavery was general in his day; that he said nothing against war although war was the chief honorific profession of his day. To the argument that his general teaching implied opposition to slavery and war they replied that the highest ethical leadership is not in abstract principles nor in pious professions, but in the concrete and the specific. Meaningful words must be tipped with steel and accurately aimed.

In my judgment, one of the greatest services rendered to religion in our time is the freeing of it from the grip of the historic ethnic religious leaders. Thousands of modern-minded souls in the midst of the new social setting and by means of the scientific spirit and method are more competent in the spiritual realm than were the fathers of the world religions and of the sects of Christendom.

The trend is away from one-man religion and in the direction of a social quest to find satisfactory values for all mankind.

The trend of modern religious thought in the evaluation of doctrines is away from the dogmatic and in the direction of the experimental. It is perhaps here that we find the greatest difference between the older and the newer mind in religious matters. The older mind thinks of religion as consisting largely of a set of doctrines, and of doctrines as rather definitely fixed. The newer mind thinks of religion as consisting largely

of experimental quests, and of the conclusions of the quests as tentative.

The older mind did not hold doctrines as hypotheses but as certainties. He was concerned with finalities. He felt the need of anchoring to some rock of ages. To doubt was to be damned. But the newer mind thinks of nothing so little as of certainty. In fact he rather doubts whether any certainty exists. He feels the thrill of novelty. For him it is postulates and hypotheses, not dogmas and certainties.

The more modern-minded of even the conservative clergy regard such basic doctrines as God, soul, and immortality as hypotheses. They defend these hypotheses on much the same ground as the scientists do theirs, namely, as working theories to be judged by their results. It is a far cry from this modern attitude to the old order in religion when a Jonathan Edwards spoke with absolute certainty of the will of the Calvinistic God to the immortal souls that hung on his words. There was a dramatic situation. Heaven and hell were as real as Northhampton. Immortal souls hung in the balance. This situation accounted in large part for the great preaching of those days. It was likewise in the Hebrew tradition when prophets spoke the will of the eternal. But today it is difficult to get oratorical, much less eloquent, over the tentative hypotheses that must constitute the metaphysical message of the modern preacher.

The trend is away from doctrines considered as authoritative pronouncements about the eternal, and in the direction of doctrines considered as the orderly arrangement of the convictions by which we live.

Thus may be seen the necessity for a restatement of the nature of religion itself. Here again the trend is away from religion understood as man's response to "the determiner of destiny," or even as man's response to superhuman sources of fortune; away from religion understood as "man's conduct facing Godward," and from the fascinating and poetic theory that religion is "the life of God in the soul of man"; away also from the notion that religion is necessarily tied up with any theistic interpretation of cosmic existence.

Rather is the trend in the way of regarding religion as a human effort to find satisfactory modes of living, in the course of which many personal, social, planetary, and cosmological theories may be postulated, tested, and abandoned; the abiding thing being the urge to newer and newer efforts to reach ever-receding goals.

The vernacular use of the term *religion* is illustrative. When a man commits himself to a great *cause* we say that cause becomes his religion. We speak of men who make their art or their business or their social theory, their religion.

It is not likely that religion will cease to concern itself with the effort to understand man's cosmic setting, nor should it abandon such effort. It is natural that man should forever attempt to push back the veil of mystery that hangs so tantalizingly about him. Modern minds are well aware how painfully inadequate is our total knowledge; but they feel that the little knowledge man does possess is his instrument and his hope of further conquests of the dark. In controlling life situations a little factual knowledge is worth worlds of mystery.

Religion as thus understood is developing new ideals and techniques for accomplishing its purpose. Fact finding becomes more significant than wishful petition. What man really wants becomes of more concern than what it has been said that he should want. Aesthetic expression is regarded as superior to monastic repression. Scientific apparatus ranks higher than sacred images. The free play of free minds replaces the submissive will.

In sum, the trend in modern religious developments is away from the transcendent, the authoritative, the dogmatic, and toward the human, the experimental, the tentative; away from the abnormal, the formal, the ritualistic, and toward the normal, the informal, the usual; away from the extraordinary mystic expression, the exalted mood, the other worldly, and toward the ethical, the social, and the worldly.

We are beginning to see that no particular philosophy or theology of the nature of the universe is prerequisite to religious living, and that no particular historic religion is adequate to meet the needs of our time. We are coming to understand that the liberal attitude of inquiry, implemented by scientific method and motivated by social values, is the proper way for mature people to face the mysteries of the universe and the problems of society.

What Is a Minister?

THADDEUS B. CLARK

The development of democratic America has presented the minister of a liberal church with a problem he did not request. The religious institution was formerly a sacred society and the officer of it a person of some sacredness ordained to conduct specific ceremonies that fulfilled the sacramental character of the society. This ancient institution emerged into democratic society with only the modification of Protestantism to readapt it to its new situation. Protestantism offered the advantages of a priesthood that was not so removed and untouchable that it indulged in monasticism and celibacy, and it had adopted some of the implications of the idea that "every man is his own priest." Yet this sacramental theory lingered on, and even today the minister makes some acknowledgment of the tradition.

The practice of contemporary America has moved farther from the tradition than the theory has moved. In practice, the liberal church has deserted this sacramental institution and become a "voluntary association." The voluntary association has been noted as a characterization of American life, as indeed it is. Almost everything we do that is not a function of the state, of commerce and industry, or of the family, is performed by us through a voluntary association. The voluntary association is a group we can join or resign from at our own inclination; it exists to provide a rather specific service; it is controlled by its membership though the leadership often finds means of dominating. It includes all our clubs—civic, service, social, cultural—and a host of organizations that stupefies belief if one cares to look through a list of them, such as that which he

might find in the classified section of the telephone book.

This voluntary association is a major factor in American life, and it should take little persuasion to get agreement to this point. Our government has even been characterized as a government by the pressure group, which is the voluntary association in its political function. At least one major industry has come to be governed in its practices almost altogether by the pressure of voluntary associations—the motion pictures. For the motion pictures have reached the point in their retreat before group pressures so that they film only the distillation of the unobjectionable, and their products are very empty indeed.

Now the modern liberal church is much more like the voluntary association than it is like its medieval and ancient forebears. Even the more orthodox churches have been forced to function in the democratic society as voluntary associations, since that was about the only role that was accorded them. The liberal church has gone much farther in the process and has done so in most cases willingly and enthusiastically. If the liberal church wishes to look for institutions comparable to itself for study, it should turn to the Masons, the bridge club, the Y.M.C.A., and the Society for the Prevention of Something-or-Other.

And the minister—what has his position become? The minister is an executive director. The aim of every one of these voluntary societies is to have a large enough income so that it can employ someone to send out the programs, plan the meetings, see that the bills are paid, hire the janitor, and help the membership committee figure out how to get new members; this person is called an executive director. Whether he likes it or not the minister of the liberal church has become an executive director, and what else could he become, if the liberal church was to become a voluntary association?

One of his predicaments, then, (for certainly this is not the only one) arises from the need for a reconciliation of his duties as an executive director with those duties suggested by the ancient and honorable profession from which he would like to think he has descended. And a significant part of his problem arises from the fact that that actual practice has gone far toward making him an executive director while his heart and mind lag some distance behind. I do not know about Universalist ministers or any other kind that might be called liberal, but I hazard the speculation that most Unitarian ministers have their eye focused on the great men of our early period as proper prototypes, Channing, Parker, et al., when, as we like to suppose, the minister was really a figure in his community.

The minister of the modern, liberal church tries to understand his office by analogy. He compares himself with the priest. Finding this distasteful, he likens himself to the prophet, and is considerably more pleased. The prophet, however, was no church official and habitually found the institution corrupt. It is inevitable that the modern minister should also compare himself with the administrator.

The administrator, the executive, the director, the supervisor, or the manager is a familiar figure in our contemporary American world. He is the person who sees that things get done in a world preoccupied with doing things. The minister as a paid functionary of the church finds himself in the role of administrator, and it is only candid of him to admit that this is so. In this world of organizations the manager and executive director are all important figures; and if the church is to exist alongside other organizations, it must have competent managers in order to keep pace. So the modern minister has become an administrator whether he likes it or not.

Ministers recognize amongst themselves the colleagues who have a special gift at administration. They do not always hold such talents in the highest esteem, and would likely value either intellectual, spiritual, preaching, or counseling ability as a higher professional skill; yet it is known, too, that the man most likely to succeed in running a church, in the short run anyway, is the man with executive competence. The times and the laity force this upon the ministry.

We are a highly organized society accustomed to operation by organized groups. Our livelihood, our politics, our aesthetic needs, our social needs, and our pleasures are all organized. Even as private a hobby as collecting postage stamps is highly organized, and I shall not be surprised when I am told that a society has been organized for the playing of solitaire. Under these circumstances it is inevitable that the church must have an efficient and effective organization, for it could not continue to exist and thrive if it did not.

The laity, who are practical people, know only too well from all their other experience that a church must be well-managed if it is to persist. It is natural that they should expect this competent management from their minister. And in the liberal church, where in the end the laity makes the choice, good managers will be found to run the churches. The laity will get good managers by a process of selection if by no other means, and denominational officials will discover that a minister cannot be placed unless he can be certified as a good executive. This will force national organizations and theological schools alike to lay great stress on executive ability, and when they reach this end we shall have defined the minister that is—an executive. Priests and prophets will be persons of the past.

I am not sure whether I shall now be arguing that the minister should be an executive or that he should not be, but I shall follow along with my argument and those who wish can put me on one side of the fence or the other. The minister can be an executive and can be trained for his executive functions, I feel, without losing those qualities which are necessary to the fulfillment of the purposes of the liberal church.

A large denomination has a solution at hand which meets immediate needs, but which does not solve the basic problem. For the large church can provide for a differentiation of function in its ministry and while some men are coached for executive positions, others can be trained as counselors, preachers, scholars, and even as prophets though I am not sure how a prophet is trained. The Roman Catholic church can follow such a program with ease and the result is a most effective institution, though it is almost impossible not to succumb to the inevitable temptation of promoting the executives to high positions, where, to be sure, executive ability is needed, but where the executive temperament will sacrifice everything to the increase and efficiency of the institution. The small church is at a serious disadvantage since almost all its ministry must be used in the single function of running churches, but even here some differentiation is possible and could be cultivated and planned.

A major value of this differentiation in function is the protection of the profession as a whole from a too narrow definition of itself. If all ministers became psychiatric counsellors the end of our institution would be in sight. And if we all became executives in any limited

sense, I fear the purposes of liberal religion would be vitiated.

A second value of this differentiation would be the possibility of specialist training, and since the tasks of the minister are so various a great load would be taken off the minister of whom specialist training would be expected rather than "general practice" and off the theological school as well, which now gets the blame for its failure to teach ministers everything from performing last rites to baking beans in quantities for fifty. A correlative value to the greater effectiveness of this specialist training would be the value which the specialist could bring to his profession by concentration and research in a sector of the professional life.

This specialization, however, is no ultimate solution to the question of the proper role of the minister. No doubt the minister, in a way, is all things to all men. And no doubt also little odd bits of knowledge can be of help. A minister will be heard to say that what he learned as a camp counselor, or as an orderly in a hospital, or trade unionist, or as a news-reporter, or as a cook, was more valuable to him in his ministry than what he learned at theological school. Some great artist was asked by an earnest student whether a knowledge of anatomy was necessary to figure painting, and the artist replied, "Well, anything helps." The duties of the minister are so varied that anything helps. But we must repel the temptation to accept graduates from schools of business administration, from medical schools, from engineering schools, or from the cooks and bakers schools on an equal or preferred footing with graduates of theological schools. A bit of legal training, which a number of our ministers have, is a great help, but a whole generation of ministers recruited from graduates of law schools rather than from theological schools would have a definitive effect upon the liberal church.

The specialization of the minister and the concentration of his efforts more and more in one area is not to be discouraged if it is balanced by a counter specialization in other areas. The concentration in psychiatric counseling is not to be discouraged except that those persons who have promoted it over-enthusiastically as a panacea are to be more than discouraged. But the main safeguard against narrowing the profession's functions is a specialization. It is manifestly obvious that no minister can be fully skilled in every single task that he might be called on to perform. One man's ministry to a church will be greatly different from another man's, and both might be equally salutary. A conscious, advertised specialization would serve to instruct the laity that they could not expect everything in one man. Amongst my predecessors, I can number a bird fancier, a printer, and a professor of philosophy. I chuckle with glee, however, when I think of the retribution to be heaped on my successor, since I can juggle.

Since I have raised this point about specialization, I must digress to add a word of clarification, for I would not have anyone suspect that I am proposing the addition of a couple of years to our theological education. I suggest, very nearly, the opposite. We go to school too long now. We need to learn how to study by ourselves on our own responsibility, for such self-discipline is the only means ultimately to either an education or to a professional excellence. Our specialization needs to be undertaken while we are at work, on our own responsibility, with every assistance provided by our more skilled elders.

The only final protection against a perversion of the ministry, however, must be a clear understanding of its basic function. I admit that it would be better to say the basic "functions," since I have insisted that they are more than one. Yet I am inclined, somewhat sentimentally perhaps, to feel that a simple, clear-cut definition can be found to describe the minister's basic role.

We have compared ourselves at times with the priest and the prophet, but also with the exemplar, the reformer, the preacher, the counselor, the teacher, the administrator, the professional, the social worker, and the leader—to name some of the more common.

It seems to me quite clear that comparative descriptions can only be misleading. We should have more intellectual initiative. Our functions should be derived from our basic convictions. Our basic convictions are in liberal religion. First of all, then, our task is to promote liberal religion. Just what this means is a question, but it provides an orientation to have said it. The second fact of our existence is that we have hired out our services as professionals to an institution devoted to liberal religion. We are not free lances. We are not prophets crying in the wilderness across depopulated sandy wastes. We are living amongst people, and we have determined to work with them in organized groups. If our purpose is to advance liberal religion, then our vehicle is the liberal church. This much we should be able to admit provisionally.

If it is not admitted by a number of liberal ministers that one basic fact of our profession arises from the church which we have accepted as a vehicle, I shall not be surprised. There is much kicking against the pricks by ministers at this point. Many would prefer to think of themselves as independent of this institutional responsibility. Many would prefer the role of prophet, though it is well-known that few prophets had much use for the contemporary religious institution. I fear that the maxim of freedom has been used by some of us to defend ourselves against the church we have undertaken to serve.

I would not, for a moment, have it suspected that when I insist that we are officers of a church that we are bound under oath to do only what that church prescribes—no more and no less. We are not that sort of servant of the church. What I fear is that unwittingly we may become such slaves. And we shall become so, if we are not clear about the character of our service; we shall be made into executives charged with the administration of specific institutional duties and trained for the task in schools of church administration, with elective courses in cooking, sewing, choir-directing, and how to tell funny stories.

The two basic elements of our office as minister, then, are the church we serve and the liberal religion we seek to promote. The breadth of the tasks of our office is immediately obvious. We must not only be capable of making the religious institution operate as an institution in a world of institutions, but we must be capable of ministering to the private needs of the individuals who compose it. These private needs for religious liberals cover the entire range of life since we construe liberal religion to include all of life. And since liberal religion is taken by us to be so wide-sweeping, its promotion can be accomplished in many diverse ways.

At any given place and time in our social history certain techniques will be in vogue largely because they are in vogue in the larger society, and it is not surprising that psychotherapy, the social action technique of

the pressure group, and promotional publicity should be emphasized at this moment, for these are the developing techniques of the world around us. Our contemporary success will be the extent of our acumen not in adopting these techniques but in adapting them to our own special purposes. But this is almost beside the point.

The skill with which we are concerned in the end is making the church the adequate vehicle of liberal religion. We try to do this practically every time we hold a meeting in our church and every time we counsel with one of our parishioners. We try to do it every time we undertake high theological debate in the attempt to understand more clearly what liberal religion means.

We have certain basic problems that result from our inheritance. We try to operate with a vehicle that we inherited and which was anything but liberal; it was not so much a vehicle as it was a fortress and it had no enthusiasm for change or movement nor did it accept our idea of truth as growing. We also try to operate this vehicle as if it were a tank and not as if it were an omnibus, that is, we try to use it in order to batter the world around us into liberality when our church is itself by no means liberal yet. Every time we try to use it as a tank we discover its sides are paper thin and its cannon only pop-guns. Undoubtedly we have not discovered yet how to make the religious institution liberal in itself, anymore than we have discovered yet what a liberal life means in its fullest.

The consolation for our ineffectiveness is that liberal religion is barely a century old and it has had a very brief time in which to develop its unique character. The office of the liberal minister will become more clearly defined as liberal religion and its institution become more clearly defined. I feel very deeply that he will be something of a new specimen. For this reason I do not like the analogies with past offices. He takes much from all of them, but he is exactly analogous to no one of them. Believing that truth is yet being discovered, that life is still in the making, the liberal minister is pioneering and not walking well-worn paths. He is also an explorer, a researcher, a remaker of men, and a source for the dynamic of advancing life. He is a prophet, to be sure, but he is not speaking in the desert; he is trying to make an institution prophetic, an obviously difficult task in the face of the notorious solidity of an institution. Yet it is not the prophet's words he is concerned with so much as the character of the prophetic view and this he is trying to spread to all men.

It is a considerable task the liberal minister has taken on himself. It is larger than we suspect, I think, and much more exalted and noble. But it is just as well if we are not too impressed with a feeling of self-importance at the magnitude of our intentions, since one of the primary virtues that will aid us most is humility.

How Free Is Free Religion?

JOHN W. CYRUS

Religious liberals have always been conscious of strong outside forces which oppose them. All absolutism in government or in religion is their enemy; all ignorance and bigotry fight against them. These are always present in society, and are present now. In 1830 Channing said: "We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these." It is so now.

But liberals are not always conscious of threats to freedom within their own numbers, though these are always present, too. There is, for instance, the complacent liberal who thinks his job is done because the Bible is no longer quite so effective a tool of bigotry and because people no longer get excited about evolution. He does not see that countless churches still try to inculcate a servile and credulous mind, and that, if people are less interested in whether or not they are related to the lower animal orders, it is often not only because they do not much care where they came from, but also because they do not much care where they are going.

There is also the liberal who begins to feel that the critical mind ought to stop work for awhile. He is afraid that a little more freedom for the human spirit might be too much. This liberal is punch-drunk, slugged by the "influences which menace the intellect and heart." He has grown afraid of his own and man's rebellious and creative impulses. He has forgotten, if he ever really knew, that the great impulse of liberal religion is positive and affirmative, not negative and destructive; that spiritual freedom, as Channing put it, "consists in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained action of our best powers."

But now is no time for either complacency or fear. The world is pressing hard on the position which the liberal attempts to hold, but his work is far from completed. This is the time when religious liberals are indispensable to the liberal church. It can spare no one, Let the complacent liberal sit at home and say his church does not need him, and let the fearful liberal sit at home and nurse his fear—there is this much on their side of the argument: the liberal church will not die without them, and it does not need either their complacency or their fear. But if a self-styled liberal is still a man who would withstand and conquer the influences that menace the intellect and heart, then the liberal church cannot live well enough without him. For its full and hardy life, he is an indispensable man.

And I mark as a liberal, as distinctively a liberal, that man who believes that spiritual freedom is not a static position, to be held like a fortress, a piece of property to be defended, but a movement, a motion in the breast and the mind, and who must, therefore, respond to one hymn at least:

> When courage fails and faith burns low,
> And men are timid grown,
> Hold fast thy loyalty, and know
> That Truth still moveth on.

I want to direct our attention to the three major controversies which have ruffled the fine calm of Unitarianism in this fifth decade, and which illustrate threats to freedom in our midst.

The first of these is the controversy as to whether Unitarians represent Christianity or universal religion. A few years ago a survey of Unitarian opinion and belief was made to discover what, if any, statement could be made of principles upon which Unitarians are

united. The survey produced five, and many of you know them: (1) individual freedom of belief, (2) the democratic process in human relations, (3) discipleship to advancing truth, (4) universal brotherhood undivided by nation, race, or creed, and (5) allegiance to the cause of a united world community. With these five principles, the surveyors felt, they could fairly and enthusiastically represent the Unitarianism of today before the wider public. With these, they felt, a Unitarian who was being questioned about Unitarianism would not have to begin by saying haltingly, "Well, what *I* believe is . . . ," but could instead say confidently, "*We* believe these things."

But a small number of ministers and churches balked at this kind of statement of Unitarian faith. It is not Christian, they said. There is nothing here about Jesus, or God, or the church, or the Bible, or salvation. These are fine principles, but they do not constitute a Christian statement, they said; and, so saying, they associated themselves under the name Unitarian Christian Advance to supplement a larger program called simply Unitarian Advance. But they seem to me to be saying something else. They seem to be saying: We must not seem to be any less Christian than we already seem; we must not have more freedom from traditional Christianity than we already have; we must not depart further from Christian orthodoxy than we have departed. Ours is free religion, but it ought not be free to do this.

Unitarians have often wondered whether they are Christians or not, some saying, "Of course we are," others saying, "Of course we are not," still others saying "Well, we ought to be," and some others still saying, "It does not make any difference." One finds the same assortment and variety among persons who have newly affiliated with a Unitarian congregation. There are those who when they join a Unitarian group have the feeling that at last they can be Christians. They come to Unitarianism from a religious background in which they felt it was not possible to be essentially, importantly Christian. Then there are those who enter Unitarian fellowship with the feeling of relief that they are through with the whole matter; that if what they came from was Christian, they are glad to be rid of it. Other new Unitarians do not feel any fundamental break with orthodoxy in religion and hold the opinion that both Unitarians and non-Unitarians ought to see that they share a great deal in religion. They are disposed in days like these to cultivate a common Christian front against anti-religious forces in our society. They would like to appear more Christian than most orthodox groups think them to be. Finally, there are those new Unitarians who feel that the whole question is a proper question for the orthodox mind but not for the liberal. Anxiety about whether one is or is not a Christian, they feel, is a hangover from orthodoxy. For orthodoxy it is important to make a clear and formal distinction between Christians and non-Christians, but this has no point for the religious liberal who has at his disposal whatever is valuable in Christian tradition or in any other.

Now, however much difference there is among these varieties of Unitarian opinion about Christianity, there is a strong agreement among them all. It is that, regardless of whether they feel that they have left Christianity behind or have at last entered into its heart, all of them feel they have discovered a more universal, a freer and more open air for their lives, "enlargement of thought and affection." And this, I believe, is the real importance of liberal religion.

The answer to this controversy lies in the experience so typical of all Unitarians: that in their liberal atmosphere they have had the experience of feeling an "enlargement of thought and affection" that they had not before or do not have in association with other religious groups. We are free to follow the leadings of that experience as far as they may take us. Meanwhile, most of traditional Christianity does not recognize us officially as Christians. But the plain history of Christianity shows it has never been a universal religion, and our own experience of liberation from it is enough to indicate that Christianity as we have known it, as it has been and is now, can never become the religion of one world. Anxiety about whether we are or are not Christian is an orthodox, reactionary trap. We are free, if we will be free, to follow the "enlargement of thought and affection" with confidence, and without anxiety about such names as we may either lose or gain. We ought to know we are that free if we wish to be. We ought to wish to be. Obviously many of us are not that free and do not want to be.

The second of these three controversies is that between theism and Humanism. This takes place on the level of philosophy rather than that of theology. Roughly speaking, theism is that school of religious thought which emphasizes belief in God as the main matter in religion; and Humanism is that school of thinking which emphasizes the importance of believing in and understanding human nature. At their two extremes theism claims that belief in God is the first and last thing in religion, and that many of man's resources for living, moral standards, judgments, values originate from some source outside his own experience and his best thought and feeling, while Humanism claims that the idea of God belongs with other ancient religious beliefs which are so encrusted and penetrated with superstition and irrationality that they have become deeply harmful rather than helpful to the human spirit.

Therefore, the theist looks at these five principles of Unitarian agreement and says of them: They are not only not Christian; they are not religious. They are admirable things to believe in and live for, but they are not religious. They say nothing about God. They acknowledge no non-human source for human values, no non-human help for human troubles. The theist goes even farther. He says: If we are going to stop talking about God, then we are going to cease being a church, and we will die as a movement, and we will deserve to die.

And on the extreme of the Humanist side one hears Humanists saying: The greatest obstacle to genuine religious progress is this belief in God. We have to get people to stop appealing to something beyond their own powers to make their lives good. We have to get them down to the real business of applying their best science, their best philosophy, their best poetry, and their strongest will, to the besetting problems of mankind.

Well, how free are we? Are we free to be religious, to maintain churches, without belief in God, if that belief should lose its importance and its validity for us? I find the answer in Channing's words about spiritual freedom. If the "enlargement of thought and

affection" leads us away from belief in God, we are free to move that way. I am not a Humanist, strictly speaking, but I know that belief in God is not the determining mark of a religious person. For years Unitarians have accepted as members persons who said frankly that they were atheists, and in the Third Unitarian Church of Chicago there is a pulpit which is named the Robert Ingersoll pulpit, because the great nineteenth century agnostic made a gift many years ago toward the purchase of a new pulpit for that Unitarian church.

Personally, I grow disgusted with the radical Humanist who spends his energy chiefly in attacking belief in God. It is not only bad taste and a waste of time; it indicates that he is not free to pursue the real business of religion himself, the business of mobilizing human will and thought and affection for meeting and enjoying life. But I can scarcely endure the theist who is devoured with anxiety about Humanists, and who proclaims that Humanists are necessarily not religious. This anxiety about belief, even about belief in God, is a disease of the orthodox, not of the free mind. Let the theist make his belief in God strong and healthy; let him make it meet the real test of religion, that it should start in men a creative fire to face life with joy and with determination to overcome the great obstacles to human happiness. Then his belief needs no hysterical defense. Let the Humanist meet the same test.

The third great controversy among Unitarians is that which concerns religion and politics. Where does religion leave off and politics begin, and, more specifically, where does religion leave off and where do radical politics and radical political belief begin? Among those who wish to draw the line some have said of these five principles of Unitarian agreement: These are not religion; they are politics. Yet no one is inclined to make this statement except those who are afraid of radical political and social philosophies.

Well, many of us are, and therefore let me quote these lines from a book entitled the *Import and Outlook of Socialism.*

> A long-suffering people's redemption awaits the will of the people themselves. When they shall have learned that, since they—the proletariat—are the great majority they have but to stand together and pull together, the hour of their deliverance will have struck. . . .
>
> The immediate and pressing task, therefore, is the development of a political organization which shall be the conscious expression of unity, and which, placing here and there a Socialist in office, shall command for the body a due measure of respect. Imagine the consequences in this country if the Socialist Party had the votes of one-half or even of one-fourth of the working men, and in Congress, say, one hundred members. . . .

Now why do I quote these lines, these class conscious lines? Whose book is it? It is not mine. I found it in the Omaha Church library. It was bought in 1910 by a much respected and still living member of that congregation, and later given to the church library by her. But who wrote it? A labor organizer? A Communist? No, a minister. A minister named Newton Mann who held that pulpit with great dignity and distinction for twenty years.

Now the question is not: Are religious liberals free to become Socialists? They not only are; they have been often. The question is this: Are religious liberals free to explore the political implications of their religion, as they see those implications, even when those implications take them outside the conventional and status quo patterns of political, social, and economic thinking. Well, of course they are, and of course they must be. Before Christ, the prophets strove to apply religion to the social and political patterns of their day, and the vitality of their religion lay in this struggle. Unitarians must be the last people to draw the line of separation. When for the "enlargement of thought and affection" the spirit travels into politics, they must not say: Here we must end freedom in religion.

Are there real threats to freedom among self-named liberals? There are. Last summer fourteen Unitarians formed an association called the National Committee of Free Unitarians. Then they issued a bulletin. In this bulletin they announced their purpose. That purpose is "the elimination [from Unitarianism] of communistic, materialistic, humanistic, naturalistic, or other philosophies, likely to destroy religion and the American way of life." Free Unitarans! Free Unitarians! Isolated, insular Unitarians, rather! They do not even understand their own history. For, relative to the traditional and orthodox churches, taking the historic stands of those churches as the test, Unitarians have always been materialistic, humanistic, naturalistic and sometimes communistic. Their purpose would require censoring and rewriting Unitarian history, excommunicating at least one-half of all Unitarians, and firing at least one-half of the present Unitarian ministry. If they began in this part of the country they might well begin with me, who am certainly guilty, if I understand what they mean by all these words, on all counts.

There are threats to freedom within free religion. There is work still for the true liberal who would follow the "enlargement of thought and affection," who would seek "the unrestrained action of our best powers." These are free men, they say. They are not free. We are not free enough.

This is no time to draw up exclusion laws for a liberal religious movement. This is no time for a genuinely liberal man to grow complacent in his liberal affiliation. Exclusion will not save or sway the world mind. Complacency will not save the man or keep him free.

We have far, far to go with mind and heart. The open, responsive mind and heart know no long resting place in a world that moves and changes daily because dynamic forces move it: dynamic fears, dynamic hopes, dynamic savagery and ferocity, and dynamic loves.

How free is free religion? If it follows its true genius, it is free for work beyond its present small accomplishment. It is free to move out by the leading of the open heart and mind from the last clinging elements of a Christianity too small and a church too mean toward a religion universal, toward an international house of religions and races, toward a great inclusive amalgamation of sound human intellects and hearts. It is free to move from the last remnants of an anxious theism toward a really great and free Humanism, with or without God. It is free to lead the religious consciousness into the arena of political and social problems which now bulk so huge and so threatening to freedom of all kinds.

For free religion is concerned with the upward motion of the person, the growth and reach of the soul, with all of its great purposes; to perceive the beauty of the soul of Jesus, or to drink from the universal font of the aspiring human spirit; to know God, or to discover and disclose the full powers of man; to make great peace with life in its eternal aspects, or for its temporal muddles to find the energy, courage, and idealism to withstand and overcome them.

Meditation

RUDOLPH W. GILBERT

Spirit of Life and Love and Beauty,—we give thanks for Life and Love and Beauty.

We give thanks for life,—that mystery in the world that is not content to remain as it is, but must grow; a force that works in us and all about us. It is beyond the reach of the microscope; nor can it be discovered by the far reaches of the telescope. Each spring sees its awakening in nature, and each morning finds it surging with renewed vigor in man. We see it renewed and then disappear in its many manifestations,—yet life itself does not grow old.

We give thanks for the gift of Life.

We give thanks for the gift of Love,—an even more mysterious part of our existence. Its force is no less powerful than the force of life itself. It finds its way into all places,—in the hovel as in the palace it worketh wonders. It weaves a garment of splendor and would clothe all mankind with it.

We give thanks for Beauty,—that which in the world outside appeals to the inward man; that which is in the marble, and yet outside it. A spirit that has been captured on canvas or in song, yet remains free to be captured again by its lover.

Life, Love, and Beauty,—ever considered the gifts of the gods to man. May we not take them lightly, but cherish them with reverence.

We have denied life its fullest expression; we have taken the divine gift and, with ships of war and guns of steel, we have snuffed it out like a candle. In our greed for gold we have enveloped our cities with a pall of smoke that is, in reality, the funeral veil of this divine gift.

Instead of love we have too often fostered hate. Nation has turned against nation and, in order to deny life to the other, has denied love to itself. In our ambition for personal power and wealth, we have denied the possibilities of love to ourselves and to others. Love cannot come to its full bloom where fear, want, and hunger stalk a man's footstep.

In ignorance we have blinded ourselves to Beauty and denied its revelation to others. Souls are starved for thee this day, O Beauty. Grant us, O God, the strength and courage to tear from our eyes the veil, that we may behold her in all her splendor; that we may hear her voice; that we may not deny the vision of her, or the sound of her voice, to any.

The Study Table

Two Pioneers

AND LET US REASON TOGETHER. *By George A. Gordon. Boston: Beacon Press. 381 pp. $3.00.*

LYMAN PIERSON POWELL. *By Charles Macfarland. New York: Philosophical Library. 299 pp. $3.75.*

The present reviewer recalls vividly hearing Dr. Gordon in his historic pulpit in Boston. Hearing him was an experience as well intellectually as aesthetically. He was a great thinker, a philosopher in the pulpit, an artist in the use of words. It gave one a definite assurance to know that Gordon believed in God. He also believed in mankind. The reviewer recalls his words: "You are not all bad, neither are you all good." He had a manner of putting things in unforgettable ways. His deliberateness of speech made one feel the importance of his words. He always began his prayers with these words: "Infinite Father," and the worshipper felt drawn into another world. This volume of selections from Gordon's books and articles brings back the man who ought not to be forgotten. This is a memorial volume and arranged for daily meditation and study for an entire year.

Dr. Macfarland in the companion book (these books go well together) tells the story of another pioneer in religious thought. Powell was born in Delaware at the close of the Civil War. He taught school, earned a degree at Johns Hopkins, studied theology, became an Episcopal minister and finally a college president. This is the normal routine of many Americans, but Powell's influence and interests always went beyond the ordinary. Dr. Macfarland, as usual, has written with great lucidity and power. These two books will serve as a tonic to discouraged Americans. Get them and read them.

C. A. HAWLEY.

Book Notes

CONFESSIONS OF AN AGNOSTIC CLERGYMAN. *By E. Stanton Hodgin. Boston: The Beacon Press. 235 pp. $2.50.*

An informative and readable story of a rich pilgrimage from a small Friends community through a period of confused wandering among different churches and on to the peace of a mature Humanist philosophy of life in a great metropolitan pulpit.

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RELIGION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. *Edited by Vergilius Ferm. New York: Philosophical Library. 470 pp. $5.00.*

A volume of authoritative facts and interpretations of the world's greatest religious movements, from the oldest to the newest, by persons who see these movements with sympathetic understanding. The chapter on Naturalistic Humanism, by Roy Wood Sellars, will be of particular interest to readers of UNITY, but every chapter will be profitable to students of current religious trends.

CURTIS W. REESE.

Western Unitarian Conference Annual Report of the Executive Secretary

May 14, 1948

RANDALL S. HILTON

This is my fifth annual report. It hardly seems possible that it has been five years since I was elected Secretary of the Conference. However, it was at the annual sessions held at the Third Church in Chicago, May 24-25, 1943, that I was elected Secretary. It has been a very busy and happy five years. That probably is why the time has passed so rapidly.

Much has happened during this time span. I cannot begin to cover even the outstanding and notable events. During this time there have been 21 changes in ministers. Two of our long-time loyal and valued colleagues, Dr. Von Ogden Vogt and Dr. Charles E. Snyder, have retired. Our summer assembly, the Lake Geneva Conference, has almost doubled its attendance. Our representation on the Board of the American Unitarian Association has greatly increased and our influence in the General Alliance has been tremendously augmented. The American Unitarian Association has turned again to the personnel of the Western Unitarian Conference for a minister-at-large. The Reverend Lon Ray Call, former Secretary of the Conference, was employed seven years ago as minister-at-large and still holds that position. A second minister-at-large is being employed by the Association in the person of the Reverend Grant Butler, minister of our church at Des Moines. He begins this new work on August 1st.

The Unitarian Advance program which I mentioned in my first report to you has been undertaken in part although there is much more to be done. The problems of victory in war, mentioned in my second report in 1945, have proved even greater than I then thought they would be. The unmitigated enthusiasm and courage for which I pled in 1946 is being sorely tested and the peace of mind I so much desired for our churches and members is being threatened by confusion and hysteria. Last year I spoke of the sharpening lines between reaction and liberalism. Today they are even sharper, and occasionally the diversity of our convictions threatens the unity of our spirit.

I will talk further about some of these things in a few minutes. But first let me give you a few facts and some information that you should have. You have probably noted that the Western Conference news in UNITY now covers two pages instead of one.

During the past year there have been the following ministerial changes:

Carl Storm to Minneapolis from Lincoln.
Philip Schug to Lincoln from Urbana.
William Gaskin to Moline.
Ellsworth Smith to Cincinnati, First Church.
Max Gaebler called to Davenport from Westford, Mass.
Arnold Westwood called to Urbana from Brewster, Mass.

The following churches are in the process of looking for ministers:

Hinsdale—resignation of Robert Turner.
Evanston—resignation of John Nicholls Booth.
Des Moines—resignation of Grant Butler.

My duties since the last Conference sessions have among other things taken me to the May Meetings in Boston, the Lake Geneva Conference at College Camp, Wisconsin, the Minnesota Conference at Camp Idhuhapi, the Michigan and Toledo Conference at Ann Arbor, the General Conference in Washington, the Iowa Unitarian Association in Des Moines, the Meadville Theological School Christmas Holiday Seminar, the March Board Meeting of the American Unitarian Association in Boston, and the Unitarian—Universalist Ministers Institute at Marquette State Park in Illinois. I have made two church surveys, quite different in nature, in Evanston and Iowa City. In addition I have visited the following churches one or more times:

Alton	Evanston
Ann Arbor	Ft. Collins
Chicago, First	Geneseo
Chicago, Third	Hinsdale
Chicago, Peoples Liberal	Iowa City
Chicago, Beverly	Kansas City
Cincinnati, First	Milwaukee
Cincinnati, St. John's	Minneapolis
Colorado Springs	Quincy
Davenport	
Dayton	Rockford
Denver	Shelbyville
Des Moines	Toledo
Detroit	Urbana
Duluth	Wichita

One of the most interesting, exciting, and thrilling experiences has been the formation of a new Unitarian church on Chicago's South Side. After about ten months of steady effort the Reverend Lewis McGee has gathered together over fifty families to establish the Free Religious Fellowship of Chicago. It meets in the Y.W.C.A. at 46th and South Parkway. It was officially organized on April 25, 1948, and has applied for membership in both the Western Conference and the American Unitarian Association. Here is a church, interracial in scope, serving one of the great neglected areas in the nation's second largest city. Our congratulations and best wishes go to the Reverend and Mrs. Lewis McGee and the loyal men and women who have founded this new Unitarian church.

Now let us return to some of the more general problems which confront us. They seem to me to be three in number: (1) the shortage of ministers; (2) the tensions within our churches; and (3) the preservation and extension of our liberal, democratic faith.

The shortage of ministers, especially of the quality needed and demanded by our churches in the Western Conference, is particularly acute. This shortage is due to several causes. (1) The very few men who were training for the ministry during the late war. (2) The fact that several of our chaplains did not return to the ministry. (3) That there have been a number of men who have left the ministry to go into business and social service positions. (4) The seeming inability to get an effective recruiting program under way. (5) A

persistent resistance among our own ministry itself to a planned program of recruiting of liberals of other denominations. (6) The uncertainty concerning the professional status of ministers in Unitarian churches. And (7) the low salary standards of Unitarian churches in general.

The Unitarian Ministerial Association is concerned with these problems and is attempting to do something about them. I will mention only one of their committees, that on the office of the minister. The chairman of this committee is the Reverend Robert T. Weston of Louisville. The ministers' session at this conference will be devoted to this question. We are hopeful that as a result of the work of this committee there can be a clarification of the professional status of Unitarian ministers.

In regard to the low salary standards, it is only fair to say that the churches of the Western Unitarian Conference have done a good job in increasing salaries during the past five years. However, there is still room for improvement. The low salary base throughout the denomination is one of the major elements in all of the causes given for the current ministerial shortage. The Board of the Western Conference is taking this problem seriously and has appointed a committee of laymen to work on it. The committee consists of Mr. Nathan T. Ladenson, chairman, of the Evanston church, Dr. Emmett Fayen of the Cincinnati First Church, and Mr. Roman Hruska of Omaha. You will hear from this committee and I urge that you cooperate with them in this very important task.

I did not list among the contributing factors to the ministerial problem that of the tensions that exist within our church. It is a factor but it is more of a problem to the churches themselves as working organizations. At the present time there is no correlation between the existence of the tensions and the adequacy or inadequacy of the ministerial leadership.

We want to do something about these but it is difficult to know how to get at them. Your program committee for these sessions has arranged for panel discussions on "The Local Church and Social Issues" and the "Local Church and Religious Education Issues." These will deal with some of the pressures exerted upon our churches and their members. At the Geneva Conference this summer, August 22-29, there will be four evenings devoted to discussing "Unitarian Tensions Today." These will be led by Dr. Curtis W. Reese and Dr. Merrill Bush. Perhaps it is well that we are having as a general lecturer in the mornings at Geneva Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, an eminent Chicago psychiatrist.

I would like to point out that the current confusion and hysteria are creating problems in many of our churches. It should be made perfectly clear that these tensions are really testing the sincerity of our liberal pretensions and the depth of our democratic roots. Honest difference of opinion is one thing. But when conviction becomes warped by an unyielding dogmatism and/or an hysterical emotionalism the basic principles of freedom and democracy no longer command respect and are defeated by the tyranny of temper tantrums.

It is our high duty in these days to demonstrate that there is one social institution in the community, namely, the Unitarian church, which is sufficiently loyal to democracy and the dignity of all men that it can overcome and function in spite of fundamental disagreements. If you and I cannot within our own fellowship achieve harmonious living, how in the name of all that is holy can we expect men of lesser principles to see the light and build a peaceful world for us. If we can accomplish this feat then our lives and our churches will be a beacon light to all mankind.

It is a beautiful ideal for which we strive in our local churches and throughout the world. Let us be practical and begin at home. Not that we would forget the larger problems. But rather that we might be better prepared to deal with them as individuals and institutions, in experience and organization. Is your church organized on a truly democratic basis? If so, then another question: Are the fundamental principles of sound administrative procedures carried out? Are the members of your board and your minister sufficiently familiar with personnel practices and group techniques to elicit maximum participation? Are the members of your church fundamentally grounded in the principles of liberal religion and the history of the Unitarian movement? It is making the answers to all of these questions "yes!" that is essential to building efficient and effective institutions for the extension and preservation of our liberal democratic faith.

Free religion has been called an American Faith. The liberal democratic faith can become the faith of all mankind. But it cannot be shoved down people's throats by either sermons or bombs. It is a faith that must be caught from example and through experience. I covet for our churches the exalted and humble role of teachers.

Resolutions

The following resolutions on the Wiley and the Mundt-Nixon Bills were passed unanimously by the Western Unitarian Conference at its second business session, May 15, 1948, in Cincinnati, Ohio:

RESOLVED that the delegates of the 96th Annual Meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference urge that the Wiley Bill to admit 200,000 Displaced Persons be passed.

WHEREAS the Mundt-Nixon Bill (H.R. 5852) which purports to set up controls to identify Communists and Communist organizations, and to facilitate counteraction against them, would make possible the besmirchment of a much wider group of people than even Communist sympathizers, and could be used as a basis for attack upon any minority group or independent citizens of whom the Attorney-General disapproved, and would provide effective means of injuring them without the necessity of proving anything against them, we believe that it undermines the Bill of Rights and seeks to attack one form of totalitarianism by creating the groundwork for another.

THEREFORE, we, the representatives of the Western Unitarian Conference, in Annual Meeting assembled, May 15, 1948, record our opposition to it and urge that the members of our churches be informed of its dangers and request them to write their Congressmen, urging their opposition to this bill.